IFLA Metropolitan Libraries Section
http://www.ifla.org/VII/s46/index.htm
“THE CHANGING FACE OF METROPOLITAN LIBRARIES: REINVENTING THE FUTURE, BUT ANCHORED IN THE PAST”
6 – 11 May 2007
Seattle, Washington, USA

THE CHANGING TIMES II: RE-ENGINEERING THE MODE OF DELIVERY TO ENHANCE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Prepared by
Terry Lee
Chief Librarian
We are here

Hong Kong

Seattle
HONG KONG PUBLIC LIBRARIES
2007

EXISTING LIBRARIES

Central library 1
Major libraries 5
District libraries 28
Small libraries 32
Mobile libraries 10 Total: 76

NEW LIBRARIES UNDER PLANNING

Major library 1
District libraries 6
Small libraries 2 Total: 9
## USAGE OF HKPL 2004 – 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>6.84 m</td>
<td>6.94 m</td>
<td>6.99 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of libraries</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered borrowers</td>
<td>3.14 m</td>
<td>3.30 m</td>
<td>3.44 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library materials in stock</td>
<td>11.08 m</td>
<td>11.60 m</td>
<td>11.90 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library materials borrowed</td>
<td>62.13 m</td>
<td>*61.00 m</td>
<td>*61.30 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension activities organized</td>
<td>16 967</td>
<td>18 540</td>
<td>18 905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered borrowers as a percentage of the population</td>
<td>45.94%</td>
<td>47.55%</td>
<td>49.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library stock per capita</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items on loan per registered borrower</td>
<td>19.77</td>
<td>*18.48</td>
<td>*17.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference enquiries handled per capita</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Overall usage statistics of the Hong Kong Public Libraries from 2004 - 2006**

*Note: ‘*’ Renovation projects in progress*
STAFFING

Professionals: 8%
Para-professionals: 12%
Supporting staff: 80%

1395 staff

Ratio of 1 professional staff to 11.56 para-professional and supporting staff
Drivers for Change

- 1999 Civil Service Reform;
  - Principle of ‘small government’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size of the civil service</td>
<td>198,000</td>
<td>160,000(-19.20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff strength of the HKPL</td>
<td>1,225</td>
<td>1,395(+13.87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of libraries</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>76(+17.91%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASE STUDY OF TIN SHUI WAI NORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY
NOTE: ↑↓ change population from 2001 to 2013
STRATEGIC PLAN

• Paradigm shift to a new mode of service delivery;
• To contain the size of the work force;
• To maintain the standard and quality of service provided;
• To take into consideration IT applications; and
• To accommodate the likelihood request from District Councils on the extension of library opening hours.
Population

Tin Shui Wai
296,500 (53%)

Tin Shui Wai North
100,800 (34%)

Opening hours
56 hours per week

Floor area of library
494 square metres

Collection size
400,000

*Operating on bar code system
SERVICES AND FACILITIES

• Adult lending service;
• Children lending service;
• Quick reference;
• Newspapers and periodicals;
• Extension activities;
• On-line Public Access Catalogue;
• On-line database search;
• Internet search; and
• Children multimedia workstations.
### USAGE IN TSWNPL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>*DAILY AVERAGE CHECK IN</th>
<th>DAILY AVERAGE CHECK OUT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 2006</td>
<td>1,912</td>
<td>3,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2007</td>
<td>2,718</td>
<td>2,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2007</td>
<td>2,521</td>
<td>2,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>2,201</td>
<td>2,012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** *Library materials borrowed from one library can be returned at other libraries*
STAFFING IN STANDARD SMALL LIBRARY

Assistant Librarian (1)

Library Officer (1)

Security Guards

Library Assistants (6)

Functional service points
- 3 service points for check-in/check-out of library materials; and
- 2 self check terminals; and

Duties performed by Library Assistants:
- Check-in and check-out of library materials;
- Processing of library materials;
- Shelving of library materials;
- Answering simple enquiries;
- Administrative duties.
# NEW MODE OF SERVICE DELIVERY

## BACK END

* Library materials maintenance

## PUBLIC FLOOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistant Librarian/Library Officers/Assistants</th>
<th>*Customer Service Ambassadors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Note:** *Service acquired through hire of services*
COMPAARED WITH TRADITIONAL MODE

Assistant Librarian (1)

* Library Officer (1) to (2)

Security Guards replaced by Customer Service Ambassadors (output base)

* Library Assistants (6) to (3)

Library materials maintenance team (output base)

NOTE: * Two 8-hour work shifts

Functional service points

• 3 points for check-in/check-out of library materials cum readers’ registration;
• 1 to (4) self check terminals; and
DISTRIBUTION OF DUTIES

**Core duties** - 1 Assistant Librarian, 2 Library Officers, 3 Library Assistants
(Readers’ services, reference enquiries, readers’ complaints, collection development, extension activities, collection of fees and charges, handling of readers’ registration, staff supervision, contract management)

**Non-core duties – Back office**
(Check-in, sorting and shelving of library materials)

**Non-core duties – Public floor**
(Answering simple and directional enquiries, assist readers in using library facilities, maintain order in the premises)
The contract is on an output based measure. Therefore the number of staff required is not specified.
## PERFORMANCE PLEDGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance measures</th>
<th>Performance indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Check-in a library materials</td>
<td>&lt; 30 seconds after check-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-in of library materials returned after library opening hours</td>
<td>Within 1.5 hours from the library opening hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelving of returned library materials</td>
<td>&lt; 3 hour after check-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranging and record maintenance of newspapers and periodicals for use by the public</td>
<td>5 minutes before library opens</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROS AND CONS OF THE PILOT RUN

Management level

- The Assistant Librarian was able to put more focus on the provision of library services;
- Support of an additional Library Officer to assist in the contract management of the Customer Service Team and Library Materials Maintenance Team;
- Project leader from each of the service teams to assist in supervision and monitoring of the services;
- The number of staff the Assistant Librarian and Library Officers have to manage was also confined to a minimum;
- Management was able minimize the creation of permanent staff for its new library by 25%.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAFFING</th>
<th>TRADITIONAL</th>
<th>NEW MODE</th>
<th>DIFFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unchanged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant (Hourly rate)</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Materials Maintenance Team</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service Team</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security officer</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Not required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Readers’ services**

- The speedy return of library materials
- Minimize unnecessary disputes over trivial issues between readers and library staff when the latter who maybe a newcomer to the staff;
- Minimized the workload at the circulation counter;
- Library Assistants were able to focus in handling readers’ problem cases and do not have to divide their attention to shelving, patrolling, maintaining order in the premises and so on;

**Feedback from readers**

- Readers enjoyed improvement in efficiency of the service and with the support of the Customer Service Team; and
- The number of complaints received were at a minimum in compared with other small libraries. Readers enjoyed the assistance and friendly smiles they receive from the Customer Service Team.
**Preparedness for future development**

**Extension of library opening hours**
- Able to meet with the requirements through the hire of service and minimum addition to the staffing.

**Application of Radio Frequency Identification**
- The library setup is ready for the application of RFID. Upon its implementation, all management requires is to install the hardware and renovation works are only at a minimum.

**CONS**

- However, in existing libraries where the design layout is already fixed, there would be complications to redesign the library to fit into the new mode.

- While management is able to capped its staff establishment through the hire of services, it is also faced with fluctuating level of expenditure affected by the market economy.
WAY FORWARD

Good customer service is never to be ignored.

HKPL will continue to strive to improve its services provided and pursue creative means to make each reader’s patronage to the library, a value added trip.